

# FREEDOM

April 4, 2004

## *Watch*

**Soldier makes patriotism an art form**

***Page 3***

***Taking in the sights at Mazar-e-Sharif***

***Page 6***



## Giving the Hog a bath

This A-10 Thunderbolt II looks like it's enjoying the cleaning given by Airman 1st Class Russell Spurlin, aircraft electrician (on the ladder), Airman 1st Class Michael Mendez, communication and navigation airman, (foreground), and Staff Sgt. Tom Puckett, the aircraft's crew chief, all with the 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron here at Bagram Air Base. The harsh and dusty environment in Afghanistan gets into every part of the aircraft and a good scrubbing is the only way to keep the A-10 clean.

**Photo by Chief Master Sgt. David Stuppy  
455th Expeditionary Operations Group**

## Contents

**Page 3:** A Bagram Soldier captures patriotism on canvas

**Page 4:** Airmen ensure 'Hogs' do fly at Bagram Air Base  
**Mountain Voices: Weekly service member Q&A**

**Page 5:** Marines conduct communications exercise  
***Small group of Soldiers offer big help in Mazar-e-Sharif***

**Page 6:** Taking in the sights with Soldiers in *MES*

**Page 7:** Luncheon helps feed religious relationship between coalition chaplains and local Afghan religious leaders

**Page 8:** Newest crop of citizen-Soldiers welcomed to CJTFP

**Page 9:** Practicing hand-to-hand combat with the Marines

**Page 11:** Americans give Kabul school a 'kick start'

Cover photo by Sgt. 1st Class Sandra Watkins Keough  
55th Signal Company (Combat Camera)

*Marines from Company G, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines practice self defense techniques during a training session at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.*



By Mark Baker

## *Pvt. Murphy's Law*

*Freedom Watch* falls under the supervision of the Combined Forces Command - Afghanistan, and is published weekly.

CFC-A Commander — Lt. Gen. David Barno  
Public Affairs Officer — Lt. Col. Matt Beavers

*Freedom Watch*, an Army publication, is produced by the 4th Public Affairs Detachment at Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan.



Commander — Maj. Matthew L Garner  
NCOIC — Staff Sgt. Keith Thompson  
Editor — Sgt. Greg Heath  
Journalists — Staff Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson,  
Sgt. Stephanie Hall, Spc. Kelly Hunt

In accordance with AR 360-1, this Army newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military overseas.

Contents of *Freedom Watch* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense or the Department of the Army.

All submissions are subject to editing for size and content by the 4th Public Affairs Detachment, located in Motel 6, Room 204, Combined Joint Task Force-180, Bagram Air Base.

Visit the CENTCOM web site at [www.centcom.mil](http://www.centcom.mil) and click on the *Freedom Watch* or Forces in Afghanistan link at the bottom of the page to get to the *Freedom Watch*. To be added to the weekly distribution list, e-mail [Heathg@baf.cjtf180.army.mil](mailto:Heathg@baf.cjtf180.army.mil)

Visit the CENTCOM web site at [www.centcom.mil](http://www.centcom.mil) and click on the *Freedom Watch* or Forces in Afghanistan link at the bottom of the page to get to the *Freedom Watch*. To be added to the weekly distribution list, e-mail [Heathg@baf.cjtf180.army.mil](mailto:Heathg@baf.cjtf180.army.mil)



# Bagram artist captures patriotism on canvas

Story by Spc. Kelly Hunt  
4th Public Affairs Detachment

**BAGRAM, Afghanistan**—It seems tedious, the way the white paint is thinly applied on top of the gray making the aircraft come alive on canvas.

His attention to detail is what makes Spc. Jonathan Vink, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Battalion, 109th Aviation Regiment, a rare commodity on base. His work is displayed throughout Bagram, representing units and immortalizing fallen Soldiers supporting Operation Enduring Freedom.

Vink was born and raised in Belmond, Iowa and realized his passion for fine art in grade school. He often watched his older sister paint and draw and remembers deciding that he too wanted to be good at it, and he's been hooked ever since.

Vink's attraction to the fine arts led him to a career as a graphic designer in the U.S. Army and his interest in art is now reaching out to others here.

He has completed three 4 feet by 8 feet paintings, two 2 feet by 4 feet works and is currently working on a 5 feet by 6 feet and four 2 feet by 4 feet paintings for various task forces on base portraying images of the groups on canvas.

"Sometimes it is hard to understand how something that I have done could affect other individuals, but I am starting to realize that what I do for the Army, myself and the United States can be vital to morale," said Vink. "It can help to remember loved ones and colleagues, to inspire and motivate.

"When people tell me that they appreciate



Photos by Sgt. Greg Heath

*Spc. Jonathan Vink stands near his most recognized work, a memorial to fallen Soldiers, displayed at the Arrival Departure Control Group building.*

what I have done and what I am doing, it really helps to motivate me as well as come to realize that I am doing my part," he said.

But when compliments come his way, Vink is humble and mumbles a shy "thanks," especially when Soldiers are talking about his most famous work, the fallen Soldier memorial displayed at the Arrival Departure Control Group.

The painting recreates an image of three Soldiers silhouetted at dusk and was inspired by a photograph. The names of fallen Soldiers who'd served in OEF missions are listed on both sides of the painting. A chain barrier protects the memorial, so it will be preserved for years to come.

"When I saw the completed memorial painting, I felt sincere appreciation for his talent and perseverance," said Maj. Jamie Dailey, HHD, 1st Bn., 109th Avn. Regt.,

Bn. S-2/S-3. "In my mind, he truly captured the essence of a memorial to our fallen comrades."

"I'm grateful for Vink who is able to capture, record and reflect the experience and emotions of Soldiers deployed here in support of OEF IV," he added. "There are undoubtedly many aspects of our tour and mission that we'll all forget over the years, but the image of that memorial, along with the list of names, will be fixed in my mind for a very long time. I applaud Vink, not for possessing talent and ability, but rather in gratitude to him for using his ability to express on canvas the sense of appreciation we all feel towards those who have given the final measure of sacrifice."

Vink said he was surprised at the attention the memorial he created has received, but he understands the importance of recognizing our heroes and is grateful for the opportunity to portray them in his own way.

"I feel terrible that so many folks have died in this war on terrorism, (but) in some ways it really comforts me, as it comforts others, that I have done something to help remember those who have fallen," said Vink. "It is good for people and myself to see something that memorializes those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for what we have. It's nice for me to know that if I happen to die here, that I will not be forgotten as those names on that wall with the memorial will not be forgotten."



*Vink pays close attention to detail as he works on his latest painting.*

# Airmen make sure Hogs keep flying

Story by Master Sgt. Jeff Szczechowski  
455th Expeditionary Operations Group

**BAGRAM, Afghanistan** – When many of us were passing out candy to trick-or-treaters last October, 26 crew chiefs left their home at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Az., for Afghanistan, ready to do their part in the worldwide war on terrorism.

Through Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day, through a cold winter that's now warming nicely into spring, with more than a few missed birthdays and anniversaries back home, this group of dedicated Airmen hasn't missed a beat in carrying out its mission of keeping the A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft here combat ready.

"I have never seen the aircraft in better shape," said Master Sgt. Ray Turner, 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron aircraft section chief. "We have participated in all the major operations here since November, from Mountain Resolve to Mountain Storm. I'm really proud of all these young troops working over here."

One of those young Airmen is Senior Airman Kurt Buffington, a native of Missoula, Mont. Though he's looking forward to getting back home to the "things you take for granted, like family and friends," he said that he remains focused on his number one priority – making sure the jets here are ready to fly.

He stays sharp, he said, because he knows how important it is to have the A-10s ready at all times to support coalition ground troops who might need their lethal interdiction.

"The ground troops – if they need help, we're there. That's the A-10's mission here, ground support," Buffington said.

Bagram's crew chiefs are the all-around maintainers of the "Wart hogs." They inspect them before and after flight, and they launch and recover them every time they fly a mission. By the time the current group of crew chiefs rotates home in April, they will have launched more than 2,000 successful sorties.

"We run the show for our jet," Buffington said. "We take care of it. We get the ball rolling for everything that needs to be done to keep it flying."

Each crew chief is assigned his own jet, so he's responsible for that particular bird more than anything else. Although everyone pitches in to help with other aircraft whenever needed, each crew chief makes extra sure that their aircraft is in tip-top shape.

"There's a lot of pride involved. How my



*Staff Sgt. Tom Puckett troubleshoots a hydraulic leak on an A-10 Thunderbolt II aircraft.*

aircraft flies and how it looks reflects on me," Buffington said. "Everyone knows it's your jet, so you want it in the best shape possible."

The day-to-day job here is similar to the work back at Davis-Monthan AFB, he said. Even so, his deployment to Bagram Air Base has broadened his horizons as an Air Force professional.

"I've gained new experience," he said. "Job-wise, I have a different perspective now. I'm more knowledgeable. I'm a better crew chief because of this deployment."

## Mountain Voices

*What advice do you have for a Soldier newly deployed to Afghanistan?*



**1st Sgt. David Powell**  
Co. B, 1st Bn. 501st Para. Inf. Regt.  
*"To revisit all their skill level 1 tasks, and make sure they're proficient on pre-combat inspection."*



**1st Lt. Paul Rogers**  
1st Bn., 501st Para. Inf. Regt.  
*"Keep a good attitude about things."*



**Lt. Col. Harry Glenn**  
1st Bn., 501st Para. Inf. Regt.  
*"Be disciplined in everything you do and focus on the mission you have to accomplish. Also take care of your buddy."*



**Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Schofield**  
10th Mtn. Div.  
*"Be mentally prepared, mentally strong and make sure your personal affairs are squared away."*



# Marines test commo for Afghan operations

Story and photo by Lance Cpl. John E. Lawson Jr.  
6th Marine Regiment Public Affairs

**BAGRAM, Afghanistan** – The Communications Platoon from Headquarters Company, 6th Marine Regiment, held a two-day communications exercise at Camp Bulldog here March 15 and 16.

The exercise was intended to test the platoon's communication capabilities in Afghanistan, by testing certain communications equipment and identifying problems with others.

According to 1st Lt. Greg A. Lizak, a Belmont, Calif., native, communications "is not like flicking on a light switch and everything starts working. We have to adjust equipment and practice with it."

Sgt. Javier Perez, assistant wire chief, said the Marines configured communications equipment to meet the requirements of potential future operations.

"We used the CommEx to determine what settings are right for our systems," the San Juan, Puerto Rico, native said.

The Marines set up and tested satellite and line-of-site communications systems, along with other communication equipment. The equipment gives them the capability to transmit both voice and data.

Satellite systems broadcast a signal upwards, bouncing it off satellites to reach its intended target. Terrestrial systems send signals through line-of-sight directly to the receiving system.

"Satellite communication is like making a long distance call while most line-of-sight communications is like making a local call," Lizak explained.

6th Marines deployed to Afghanistan late February to early March to provide command and control to various combat and operating forces in the area.

"Communication is extremely essential," Lizak said. "With units spread throughout our area of operations, communications gives the

See **COMMO**, Page 10



*Sgt. Abdiel Garcia (left) and Lance Cpl. Daniel Rinaldi test communications equipment during a communications exercise here March 15. Communications Platoon, Headquarters Company, 6th Marine Regiment, conducted the two-day exercise to test, troubleshoot and train with various communication systems and equipment for use here.*

## Small Army team offers big support in Mazar-e-Sharif

Story and photo by Sgt. Stephanie Hall  
4th Public Affairs Detachment

**MAZAR-E-SHARIF, Afghanistan** – A team of 20 Soldiers works relentlessly behind the scenes to maintain a firm foundation of logistical support 24 hours-a-day to the Jordanian Medical Field Hospital.

The Jordanian Hospital, which is located in the northern province of Balkh, provides medical care to countless Afghans, but it's the daily support of the U.S. Soldiers that keeps this facility running.

The Forward Logistical Element, consisting of 20 Soldiers from several different units and job specialties, are responsible for a variety of support duties – from providing security for a nearby air field to ensuring generators vital to the daily operations of the Jordanian Hospital continue running.

The units these Soldiers come from include: the Logistics Task

Force 406, the 978th Quarter Master Company, the 1015th Maintenance Co., the 479th Medical Logistics Detachment, 279th Engineer Det., and the 213th Area Support Group.

The FLE provides the coalition elements within Balkh Province with food and fuel, but its primary mission is to support the Jordanian Hospital with whatever it needs, said Maj. Robert K. Liput II, the officer in charge of the FLE.

"We pretty much take all the logistical infrastructure (issues) away from the Jordanians," said Liput. "We manage it so that the Jordanians can focus on their mission, which is providing the humanitarian (medical) relief for the northwest region of Afghanistan."

The support the FLE provides for the Jordanians often differs from the support they would normally give to a U.S. element.

"The FLE provides class 1 (food and drink) items to the Jordanians on a daily basis such as fresh fruits and vegetables, meats,

See **FLE**, Page 10



*Soldiers with the Forward Logistics Element take time off from their busy schedule to enjoy the sights of the Balkh Province foothills.*

## Taking in the sights

Photopage by Sgt. Stephanie Hall  
4th Public Affairs Detachment

**MAZAR-E-SHARIF**, Afghanistan — Whenever they find the spare time, the U.S. Army Forward Logistics Element (FLE) at Mazar-e-Sharif takes advantage of all that the province has to offer.

These day trips around their area of operations give the FLE the chance to view incredible rolling foothills, to shop for souvenirs and practical items in the city of Mazar-e-Sharif, and to visit their neighbors at the British Provincial Reconstruction Team site.

Although this province is a relatively safe area, the FLE team still takes precautions on their trips. Security procedures are practiced before each trip, and each member wears their protective body armor.



*Top - The incredible rolling foothills at the base of Afghan mountains in the Balkh Province often attracts the Forward Logistics Element.*



*Left - The city of Mazar-e-Sharif is home to the Blue Mosque. This mosque is reputedly where Hazrat Ali, the cousin and brother-in-law of Prophet Mohammad, is buried.*



# Luncheon helps feed spiritual relationship

*Afghan religious leaders and CJTF-180 chaplains come together at Bagram to build bonds*

Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Johnny A. Thompson  
4th Public Affairs Detachment

**BAGRAM, Afghanistan** – Using religion as a way to build an affable relationship between the coalition forces and the citizens of Afghanistan, the Combined Joint Task Force-180 Chaplain's Office and local Afghan Mullahs (religious leaders) held a luncheon here Mar. 10 at the Viper Dining Facility to celebrate the initiation of the Parwan Mosque beautification project in Charikar.

The beautification project is the result of a five-month courtship in which the two religious leaders met monthly over lunch to discuss the needs of local villages and gain an understanding of

each other's religious faith.

"The luncheon idea started back in October when Lt. Gen. John R. Vines was the CJTF-180 commander," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Gordon Estenson, of CJTF-180. "Vines had the idea that CJTF-180 could build a better relationship with the local Afghan citizens if (both sides) were willing to understand each and could come together for a mutual cause. We are all God's children regardless of our religious practice, so for us to have lunch and use our religious tie as a way to get to know each other has helped us create a bond and respect for one another."

The first luncheon took place after the Muslim holiday Ramadan when the Chaplain's office discussed their goals of the meetings and sought the input of the Mullahs.

"Our initial goal was to identify projects in local villages that would improve Parwan province," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Kenneth Sampson, head Chaplain of CJTF-180. "But after consulting with the Mullahs we concluded that the beautification project was a project that best represented what we wanted to accomplish."

Sampson said the idea to build wells along with repairing and renovating schools and Mosques in local villages was presented during the monthly meet-

ings, but added that the Chaplain's office doesn't have resources to undertake projects of that magnitude. However, the Chaplain's office enlisted the help of the Parwan Provincial Reconstruction Team

to address the repair and renovation needs.

"The PRT has played a tremendous role in the (amicable) relationship we have established," said Sampson. "The PRT is designed to

handle projects like (this). When I told the (parishioners) in my congregation back home about the conditions here they started a collection aimed to help people less fortunate than themselves."

Estenson added that the donation, provided by The Appleton (Wisconsin) Area Ecumenical Network, Fox Valley Islamic Society and Lutheran Congregation of Fox Valley, was a culmination of several faiths that came together to serve one cause – the betterment of Afghanistan.

"Today is the harvest from many months of labor," said Sampson. "Our spirits have been enriched by you (the Mullahs) and a beloved Afghanistan, thank you for your friendship."

Reciprocating Sampson's sentiments, Mohammed Momen, Charikar Mullah and religious spokesperson said, "We are thankful for the donation and invitation to build a friendship with (CJTF-180). We want to work shoulder by shoulder with you to help make our country strong."

Though the luncheons were designed to build a friendship, after a five-month courtship the religious leaders felt that they had accomplish something much more precious – a brotherhood.

"We all are created by God and today shows that despite our difference we can come together as brothers," said Estenson.



*The Combined Joint Task Force-180 Chaplains Office discuss concerns of Parwan Province concerns with local Afghan Mullahs.*

# CJTFP welcomes newest crop of Soldiers



*Oklahoma National Guard soldiers from 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment complete forms required for in processing after their arrival at Camp Phoenix in Kabul, Afghanistan recently.*

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Robert R. Ramon  
Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix Public Affairs

**KABUL, Afghanistan**—The C-17 Globemaster III made its way to the end of the runway before coming to a stop. As the door opened, Soldier after Soldier made the trip out of the red-lit interior into the darkness of Afghanistan, and for most, it was their first time here.

This was the scene recently at the Kabul International Airport, when during a recent three-day span, approximately 350 Soldiers from the Oklahoma National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade, 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment headquartered in Sand Springs, Okla. made the long journey from their homes in the United States to the frontlines of the war on terrorism as part of Coalition Joint Task Force Phoenix.

Since last fall, several hundred other members of the 45th have been in Afghanistan serving under CJTFP. Comprised of National Guard units from more than 20 states, along with the Oklahoma National Guard's 45th Inf. Bde. Headquarters, and contingents from seven different countries, CJTFP's mission is to train the Afghan National Army, which will contribute to stability of the country and help prevent the re-emergence of terrorism.

The new personnel were a welcome sight to Soldiers who have been serving here during the past several months. Many of the new Soldiers were excited when they recognized friends they hadn't seen in months.

"When we arrived and I saw some of my friends, it was just like old times," said Staff Sgt. Daniel L. Lowe, a personnel services sergeant from Tulsa, Okla. "The Soldiers here have been very helpful to me whether I knew them or not. They offered advice on easier

ways of doing things here."

In addition to the informal advice from their fellow Soldiers, newly arrived troops received a formal briefing as part of their in-processing at Camp Phoenix. The briefing included important information on pay, medical issues, rules of engagement, life on Camp Phoenix, and security issues.

"The briefing was excellent," said Lowe. "It gave me a good idea of what life here would be like."

The facilities at Camp Phoenix are better than what most of the new Soldiers expected before their arrival.

"The camp here really surprised me. I thought I'd be working in a tent so I was surprised to see that I'm working in an actual building," Lowe said of the wooden B-hut structures.

"Considering we're in Afghanistan, we're lucky to have something like the Post Exchange," said Lowe. "The food here is pretty good, too."

After settling in, the new Soldiers were soon ready to begin their mission here in Afghanistan. Actually, most were ready even before they arrived.

"Morale was high and we were ready to go when it was time to get on the plane," said Lowe. "Food was available for us before we boarded the plane back in the States, but most of the Soldiers were too excited to eat."

The Soldiers of the 279th will play a large role in Afghanistan, providing a measure of stability to the country, and their expertise and high morale will ensure a successful mission.

"I don't know how long I'll be here, but I'm not too worried about it," said Lowe. "I'm prepared to be here until the mission is complete."



*A soldier receives protective equipment immediately after arriving in Afghanistan. During a three-day span, soldiers from the Oklahoma National Guard's 1st Bn., 279th Inf. Regt. made the long journey from their homes in the United States to the frontlines of the war on terrorism.*





*Two Marines from Company G, 2nd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment spar during one of their regular hand-to-hand training sessions at Bagram Air Base.*

# FIGHT CLUB: MARINE-STYLE

---

Story and photo by Sgt. 1st Class Sandra Watkins Keough  
55th Signal Company (Combat Camera)

---



*Marines practice grappling their opponent on the ground during the training session.*



*Army Staff Sgt. John Reece demonstrates techniques in self defense to Marines from Co. G during a training session*

## COMMO, from Page 5

commander the ability to talk to units and get them what they need.”

The communication equipment tested during the exercise is also used to communicate with the various Provincial Reconstruction Teams operating throughout various remote regions of Afghanistan. To ensure the regiment’s ability to communicate throughout the entire area of operations, the platoon contacted all units within the area, some hundreds of miles away.

The equipment these Marines work with is not the kind of radio you might find at Radio Shack, Lizak said. He explained the system the Corps and other coalition forces use has encryption and other security precautions to prevent information from getting into the wrong hands.

Geography and different aspects of the region, such as varied elevation between the mountains and desert valleys, hinder communication. “It is difficult to talk over long range in this type of terrain,” Lizak explained.

The Marines worked hard to accomplish their mission, Perez said. “They worked all morning testing everything.”

“This is what we do before we send Marines out on missions,” he said. “They know everything that could go wrong and how to fix any problem in a timely manner.”

“Since we’ve arrived here we’ve been setting up and getting ready. This exercise was the first chance since we got here to do what we trained for and show what our platoon can do,” Lizak said.

## FLE, from Page 5

pastries, cakes, sugar, dry goods, Gatorade, and soda,” said Sgt. James A. Harrison, the supply noncommissioned officer in charge of the FLE.

Liput added that because the Jordanians’ usual diet consists of a lot of fresh produce, the FLE’s higher command in Karsi-Khanabad allows the FLE to receive more fresh produce than is normally allocated.

Another service that the FLE renders to the Jordanians is fuel support. “We store and issue fuel, and the Jordanians are the biggest customer here,” said Staff Sgt. Kenneth L. Bolton, the fuel NCOIC for the FLE. “They use approximately 800 to 1,000 gallons a day for heating, generators, and vehicles.” Most of the fuel is used for the constantly running generators, which keep power for lights, heat and life-saving machines running, he said.

Medical supplies are also vital for the Jordanians, and the FLE makes sure those necessities are always in stock, said Spc. Don J. Adams, who is in charge of keeping up with the medical supply needs for the hospital. Because the Jordanians see so many patients, “the FLE gets top priority for blood and medicine,” he said. The hospital sees from 500 to more than 900 patients a day.

Right now the hospital’s pharmacy takes a majority of the daily patients, so the FLE ensures that medicine, vitamins and other pharmacy supplies are always available, said Adams.

The FLE is able to satisfy many more of

the Jordanians needs other than food, fuel and medical because of their long logistical reach.

“The Americans have been here longer, have the capability, have a much greater and longer reach as far as our supply train, and we are able to provide (logistical needs) in a much more expedient fashion than the Jordanians would if they did it themselves,” said Liput, adding that’s why both parties agreed to this arrangement.

This FLE team has accomplished a lot to improve the work area for themselves as well as the Jordanian Hospital, said Liput. “Since we’ve been here in the last seven months, this area has drastically changed in its appearance.”

Improving hospital structures, enhancing generator capabilities and strengthening security precautions are only a few of the improvements made by Liput’s team, he said.

The quantity and quality of the support produced by the FLE Soldiers is strengthened because they know that their work



*Staff Sgt. Dan G. Bakerofsky, 978<sup>th</sup> Quartermaster Company, pumps fuel into a plastic bottle so he can run tests on it later to make sure it's up to standard.*

indirectly helps each patient that walks through the hospital gates, said Harrison. “We’re supporting the Jordanians in their effort to take care of the Afghan people,” he said. “Over all, it’s a mission worthy of giving all we’ve got.”



# Americans give local school a 'kick start'

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Ron Burke  
211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

**KABUL, Afghanistan**—One by one, small, round faces filled the upstairs window of the old brick building as the vehicles came to a stop in the courtyard. Some of the faces quickly disappeared while others proceeded to move up and down, jumping as they recognized who just arrived.

Minutes later, people streamed from the entrance of the Global Education Society here in Kabul to greet the members of the 213th Area Support Group as they exited their vehicles.

The members of the 213th ASG recently paid a visit to the school to distribute donated school supplies, clothing and toys to the teachers and children.

Amid the greetings and the waving from the children on the balcony, Ramazan Zaib, the manager and coordinator of the school-orphanage emerged from the crowd to welcome Lt. Col. Platte Moring and Sgt. Maj. Terrance Werley.

"We have supplies for you—and a lot more back at the compound," Werley explained to some of the schools teachers.



*Nooria studies basic English grammar from an old workbook. There are only 20 books for 450 students.*



*Hearing that the team was leaving after donating clothes and supplies to the school, children rush over to Lt. Col. Platte Moring, 213th Area Support Group, for one last photo.*

Members of the 213th ASG then began handing out boxes of full of writing tablets, pens, colored pencils, scissors, and markers.

"They were donated by the people of the United States to help you educate the children here," said Werley.

The plight of the school was unknown to local coalition forces until Lt. Col. Kyle Goerke, who works with the Afghan Ministry of Defense Reform in Kabul, discovered their troubles and sent a plea for help back home. Goerke, from the Oklahoma Army National Guard, and Werley, from the Pennsylvania Army National Guard, joined up to help. After people back home read about the children and their situation in the local papers, donations and support poured in. Now, the people of Watonga, Okla., Myrtle Beach, S.C., and the Allentown, Pa. area all have responded.

"These children either have no family or only have a single female parent," explained Werley.

There are roughly 450 children who attend the school. The boys go to school during the morning hours and the girls attend in the afternoon. For the students at the school, in addition to receiving a basic education and learning English, they also get the opportunity to learn the trade of carpet making.

"They get to go to school, learn how to

make these beautiful carpets, and then the carpets are sold locally to help support the needs of the school," Werley said. Japan donates the materials the children use to make the carpets.

In the future, soldiers from the 213th ASG have bigger hopes for supporting the school.

"Our project is to get this whole thing," Werley says as he spreads his arms out in the room, "into a new building—a larger building, and to help them get started with supplies and school furniture."

Zaib was happy to hear the news, "Desks would be a welcome addition so the children won't have to sit on the floor. More books and teaching aids are needed also," he said. "The school's goal—our goal—is to be self-sufficient within six months to a year through the sales of the carpets that the children make."

With help from the members of the 213th ASG and many generous Americans back home, the school is well on its way to achieving that goal.

"This is a kick start," said Werley. "We will bring more 'stuff' real soon"

At the end of the day, the school staff and Soldiers looked on, with the current difficulties associated with the school temporarily forgotten, as the Afghan children played with the soldiers who came to brighten their day.



# Loyalty

**Bear true faith and allegiance to the  
U.S. Constitution, the Army, your  
unit, and other Soldiers.**